

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED ON THE

D E A T H

OF

Miss SIBYL RICHARDSON,

OF CHELMSFORD,

WHO DIED THE 12th DECEMBER, 1798, AGED 28.

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By HEZEKIAH PACKARD,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CHELMSFORD.

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"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD."

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MR. PACKARD'S SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

MISS SIBYL RICHARDSON.

MR. PACKARD'S SERMON.



MISS SIBYL B. PACKARD.



PSALM CII. 23.

“HE WEAKENED MY STRENGTH IN THE WAY; HE
SHORTENED MY DAYS.”

OUR blessed Saviour often took occasion to draw moral instruction from objects around him. Those things, which engaged the particular attention of his hearers, and which are adapted to attract the notice of mankind in general, were introduced into his discourse for religious purposes. On restoring sight to a blind person, he takes occasion to call himself *the light of the world*, and reminds the hollow hearted Pharisees of their spiritual blindness. When little children are brought to him for his blessing, he recommends the innocence and humility of the infant state, as necessary qualifications for those, who would become his disciples and true members of his church. When he was informed, that his mother and brethren had come to seek him, he declares that all, who would learn of him and follow his instructions, should be as near and dear to him, as his nearest connexions. When he saw the fowls of the air on the wing, and the fields of nature in all their vernal beauty, he is led to teach his disciples to form right and worthy notions of that providence, which clothes the grass, adorns the flower, and regards

the raven's cry. At the time he delivered his sermon on the Mount, which is so replete with practical divinity, the most striking allusions are taken from the objects which were then in view. Indeed, on whatever subject or occasion he spoke, he made use of present objects, circumstances and events to enforce his observations. This method rendered his observations more entertaining, more energetic, more profitable.

IN imitation of our Saviour's example, the ministers of the gospel avail themselves of every suitable opportunity to impress and penetrate the minds of their people. They enjoy the privilege of employing the more interesting events of providence to enforce their religious instructions. Those scenes and events, in which the fortunes of men, the sympathies of nature, and the ties of affection are deeply concerned, may be rendered productive of useful sentiments and seasonable admonitions. In the trials and afflictions of life, and in the various dispensations of providence, the great disposer of events speaks to us in language, which all can understand. By such methods, he teaches us our dependence, and calls us to our duty. Instances of mortality, by which our dearest relatives and friends are removed from our fond embraces, forcibly teach us, to work while the day of life continues; *to fill the circle marked by heaven* with fidelity and usefulness, and to take the more earnest heed to make our calling and election sure. The death of others is the harbinger of our own. Our own weakness, infirmity and exposedness to various diseases apprise us of the rapid approaches of

our own dissolution. But the agonies of expiring nature, the solemnities of a funeral, and the cold remains of departed friends slowly moving to the silent grave, open scenes which are adapted to make deeper impressions upon the mind. The warnings of death are sometimes so powerful and affecting, that the living will lay them to heart. Of this kind is the warning we receive by the death, which recently happened in this place. By this instance of mortality, affectionate brothers are deprived of their only sister, this Church of Christ of a worthy member, and religion herself of a faithful friend.

The wasting disease of the young woman, whose funeral solemnities we attended in the course of the past week, naturally leads us to the sentiment of our text. Our departed friend seems to address us from the mansions of the dead, concerning the disposal of divine providence. *He weakened my strength in the way, he shortened my days.*

ALL require to be warned and admonished of what all acknowledge to be true. Every one is ready to allow, that it is appointed unto all men once to die; but how many live without laying it to heart! All are persuaded, that after death cometh the judgment; but how many neglect to prepare to meet their God at his impartial tribunal! There are none, perhaps, who do not wish to die the death and share the rewards of the righteous; but how many conduct without regarding the issue of things, and live without religion, and without God in the world! These things are so often men-

tioned and repeated, that they cease to produce any considerable effect. They are truths which lie in so many parts of God's word and are so frequently dispensed from the sacred desk, that they seem to come of course, and therefore do not alarm. As clouds and tempests, which fill the atmosphere with the blackness of darkness, often collect and spend their force, and then dissipate without doing any material injury, leave a serene sky; so the sinner, when the storms of divine vengeance are gathering around him, and are ready to burst upon his head, and futurity is overcast with horrors, vainly hopes that all will at length subside, and leave him tranquil and peaceful. He does not seriously consider, that without repentance such a hope must perish, and that, when this hope fails him, he will sink into the depths of despair. This being the case with us, our inattention to the concerns of another world becomes almost habitual. Some striking events of providence seem necessary to rouse our feelings and penetrate our hearts. With such events we are sometimes furnished. Instances of mortality now and then occur, which with more than usual force teach us our frailty and call our attention to the hastening period of our departure. We are hereby admonished, that the tongue which now moves, and the ear which now hears, will shortly moulder and decay. Let this consideration find its way to the heart, and direct its various movements, that out of it may be the issues of life. Be assured, my hearers, that though God yet holdeth our souls in life, sentence is already passed upon each one of us. Death is the

common lot of man. God hath said to the whole human race, "*Dust ye are, and unto dust ye shall return.*" The seeds of dissolution are planted in the constitution of our natures, and many hidden causes are at work to bring us to our end. Whatever bounds may be set to our habitation, and whatever be the limits of our abode on earth, we may adopt the language of the Apostle, and acknowledge, *that our departure is at hand.* God may lengthen out our days and cover our heads with the "venerable hoar of years." We may at a late period, be gathered to our fathers' sleeping dust. We may come to our grave in full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season. And if then found in the ways of virtue and righteousness, our hoary heads will be our honour and glory, and with hopes of immortality we can depart in peace.—But the continuance of life is quite uncertain. The distance at which death is from any one of us we cannot measure. We know not what one year, one month, or one day may bring forth. God has a sovereign right to weaken our strength in the way, and to shorten our days. He is able to extinguish the sun of life in any part of its course. How many in the midst of their days are made to feel the chilling hand of death ! How many are taken from a thousand tender cares and endearments, and brought to the house appointed for all the living ! And should we reach the period of three score years and ten, and be then unprepared for death, we should have reason to lament that we had not been cut off before we had filled so large a measure of iniquity. The vices and

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 moral pollutions of youth and of riper years, added to the impurities of advanced life, render the character of the aged sinner extremely vile and base. Who then has the bold presumption to calculate upon long life, and upon a more convenient season for the exercise of repentance and piety? Who, under such awakening considerations, will venture to rest his soul's affairs upon a single and slender thread? But whether we die sooner or later, what have we to fear from the last enemy? As death is no more than a cessation of life, how can it harm us?—Did not sin sting the soul of the sinner and bring on pain and anguish in a future state of existence, death would never have been called the king of terrors. The poison conveyed to the soul by a wicked life, though it may not produce many alarming effects in this world, will hereafter rage with violence and wreck the soul with torture. Unless the remedy provided in the gospel be applied and the sting of death be taken out before the soul leaves the body, *this sting of death will remain and never be removed.* Sin infuses its venomous qualities through all the faculties of the soul, and greatly debases and pollutes them. Sin thus conceived, retained and spread, brings on the *second death.* Sin, as the Apostle says, *when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* A consciousness of guilt is what wounds and torments the sinner in the view of dissolution. The thoughts of death to all, who are not cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, must be alarming and terrible in the extreme. To all, who are not purified from the pollutions of this malignant disease, this

deadly poison, futurity is big with horror. A sense of sin and a consciousness of guilt are the prolific sources of all those painful apprehensions and alarming fears which crowd into the sinner's mind at the prospect of death and a judgement to come. By the law is the knowledge and strength of sin, and by comparing this law with his principles and practice, the sinner feels himself condemned. Comparing what he really is with what he ought to be, and what he allows and practices with what God requires and commands, he dreads the event which will bring to his trial, and the burnings of that fire, which never goes out. With pain and distress of mind he perceives that the *sting of death is sin*. But thanks to God, this very sinner by faith and repentance, may flee the wrath to come and lay hold on eternal life. He may hereby have his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. Through the mediation of Christ and the power and efficacy of the divine spirit, he may rest and rejoice in hope.

THESE observations evidently shew, that the fears of death do not refer so much to the agonies of dissolving nature, as they do to the consequences of dying. They extend beyond the boundaries of time, and look with apprehension beyond the darkness of the grave. And of what high importance it is to prepare for these consequences, and endeavor by a life of religion to remove these fears! The longest life we know is soon measured, and the shortest probationary state is of inestimable value. For on the improvement of this state of probation depends our future condition. The inspired wri-

ters compare human life, whether longer or shorter, to the withering grass, the fading flower, the flying cloud, the vanishing vapour. Days, months and years hasten to be gone. And when the time of our departure arrives, no efforts to resist the final stroke will be effectual. Youth and beauty, wealth and power, are alike unable to satisfy the bold demands of death. The king of terrors cannot be persuaded to delay his coming. to plead unfitness for the change will not stay his hand. How unwise and hazardous, therefore, to keep out of mind an event, which is appointed unto all ! If death would forget to come, because we are unmindful of his approach, we should have some excuse for neglecting to prepare for his arrival. But our want of caution and preparedness will not ward off his fatal shafts. And let us bear in mind, that if we die in our sins, we shall be driven away in our wickedness. It is on this side the grave, and not beyond it, that a fountain stands open for sin and uncleanness. In this world only does Christ exercise his mediatorial character, and God his forgiving mercy. For after the decisions of the great day of accounts, Christ will give up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. It becomes us, therefore, in this acceptable time, in this day of grace, to listen with attention to the voice of the son of God, and strive to enter into the door of mercy, which the Gospel opens. As the Spirit and the Bride invite us to come, we should incline our ear to the gracious invitation and taste the waters of life. As God worketh in us by his word, his providence and spirit, we should

work out our salvation with fear and trembling. And as we may soon be stopped in the journey of life, and have our days shortened by death, it is matter of high concern, that we seek the remission of our sins, and be in a state of constant preparation. When the curtain of time drops, the day of grace closes, and the night of death ensues, in which there is no work, knowledge, nor device. When we enter the world of spirits, our characters are sealed up to the judgment of the great day. And at the great and terrible day of the Lord, who will be able to stand? Under such trying circumstances and apprehensions, religion offers its aid. And under the influence and consolations of religion, pleasing prospects open. The clouds of doubt divide and scatter. A glorious refulgence beams from the fountain of light and happiness. Faith and hope paint delightful scenes in the full enjoyment of God. Life and immortality dawn upon the grave. *Jesus Christ hath risen and overcome death, and we also shall rise and subdue the last enemy.* The bars of death will be burst asunder, and the whole congregation of the dead will be roused from their sleeping dust. At the sound of the last trump all nations shall be gathered. All branches of the family of man will be brought to trial. Every man will receive according to his works. Each one will reap the fruits of his own doings, whether good or bad. Those, who die in the Lord, shall rise in his image to the joys of his kingdom. Them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. How comforting are these scriptural sentiments to those who are called in

providence to part with religious friends and relatives! The gospel confirms the wishes and hopes of mourners under the bereavement of pious connexions. For *the happy portion of them who die the death of the righteous is to go and be with Christ.* And it becomes us to be active and diligent in our master's service, and prepare to meet our pious friends departed, in the regions of eternal day. To call to mind the amiable qualities of deceased connexions is in this world the balm of sorrow, and it should inspire us with resolution and vigor to perform all branches of duty, that we may meet again in heaven. We should imitate the virtue and piety of those who *are gone to inherit the promises.*

THOSE, who in the course of the last week attended the remains of their *only sister* to the dreary mansions of the tomb, are in deep affliction. In such a situation tears are becoming. Over the grave of a dear friend even "*Jesus wept.*" But under their bereavement there are many sources of consolation. They enjoy the privilege of paying the tribute of a tear to her memory. They may draw useful lessons from her exemplary life. They may repair, in this season of visitation, to the same divine religion, which so well supported her under all her pains and trials. They may seek after and secure that inheritance, to which she so constantly directed her views and conduct, and to the hope of which christians are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. May this event make suitable impressions upon each of their minds,

and excite them to live in the faith and order of the Gospel.

A FULL description of the character of the young woman deceased I shall not attempt; but to notice some traits of it may be proper and useful. Her temper and disposition were amiable. Her mind was of a religious cast, and her heart was susceptible of the tenderest impressions. Being favored with good instructions and examples, for the want of which many of our youth greatly suffer, she paid early and unwearied attention to the things of religion. She distinguished herself by the life and conversation of a christian, at that period, when the propensities of youth are most apt to mislead them. Having in the course of a few years lost three sisters, by the wasting and fatal progress of a decline, and being herself of a feeble habit, she was led to expect, that God would farther *weaken her strength in the way, and shorten her days.* This consideration overcame her youthful vivacity and led on to habits of seriousness and piety. The good principles and dispositions, in which she was established, rendered her life the more desirable, and, at the same time, made her willing to resign herself to the disposal of her Maker. Indeed, the very temper and disposition, the very habits and virtues, which make the life of a friend truly amiable, and which render that friend calm, serene, and patient under heavy trials, qualify and prepare him for the stroke of death, and for the joys of heaven. In the course of her sickness she endured much bodily pain and distress, which she bore with christian patience and fortitude. To her

were appointed many wearisome days and nights. Her faith and hope however did not forsake her. She lived and died like a christian.

IN her removal from her connexions and the world, the judge of all the earth hath done right. *He holdeth our souls in life.* He fixes the bounds of our habitation, beyond which we cannot pass. Our enjoyments and lives are at his disposal. His works and ways are perfect. He is too wise to err and too good to do wrong. In the removal of any objects of our affection, he takes no more than he gave. Indeed, what he bestows is still his, and what he takes away was his before. And hence religion bids us be quiet under all his dealings. Those who patiently endure chastening, God considers as sons and deals with them as such. *For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not.* The wisdom and goodness of God are often displayed in the trials and afflictions of his saints. And the various afflictions of life work out for the patient sufferers of them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. In the pious Shunamite we have a distinguished example of calmness and resignation in the midst of trying scenes. She indulges no murmuring thoughts and repining sorrows. In the disposals of providence concerning her family, she deliberately and cordially acquiesces. Under the loss of her only son, her mind appears to be serene and tranquil. When the friendly inquiry is made, whether it is well with herself her husband, and her child, she readily answers in the affirmative, "*It is well.*" By the power of religious principles, and by the influences of

God's Spirit, her heart was brought to submission. This noble temper and disposition were derived from *piety*, which is a rich source of consolation, joy and comfort. From this source there flow pure streams, which refresh, strengthen, and bless the children of God. Our Father in heaven taught the Shunamite, and he teaches us that his ways and dealings are right. In the school of affliction we are to learn this lesson of submission and acquiescence. By things we suffer in the course of providence we are to learn obedience.—May you, my friends, who mourn the loss of a loving and beloved sister, repair to religion for support and consolation. Sorrowful and afflictive indeed is the event, which calls you to wear the habits of mourning. Liberal effusions flow from the heart, and friendship glistens upon the tears which are shed. But remember, that the cup of affliction may be rendered salutary, and really beneficial to those, who are called in providence to drink of it. The dispositions and habits, the resignation and piety, of your departed sister are good grounds of hope, that she is gone to inherit the promises. Her life and conversation bear testimony of her sincerity in making profession of the christian faith. And instead of sitting down at the table of christian communion here below, we trust that she has gone to eat bread in the kingdom of heaven. To her, death was a friend, to relieve her from pain, and to open a way to joys unspeakable and full of glory. *Blessed are the dead who thus die in the Lord.* These considerations must serve to assuage your sor-

rows and comfort your minds, and should lead you to aspire after the same joys and blessedness.

DEATH has been commissioned to make great inroads upon your family, and to remove far from your embraces, your parents and sisters dear. May the admonitions and warnings given in these events be duly improved and really sanctified. May these things render you more watchful, more religious and more obedient. Consider that sanctified afflictions are real mercies, and that they come to the children of God through the channel of covenant love. Events which appear against them may be so arranged and ordered, as to produce real benefit. May the bereavement, under which your minds now labour, be productive of your spiritual good. May the supports and consolations of the gospel attend you, the principles and maxims of it guide and direct you, and the blessings of heaven and the scenes of prosperity surround you in life. To secure the blessings of those who die in the Lord, you must like them live soberly, righteously and piously in the world. In this way, you may enjoy the fruits of that wisdom, which represents a good life, founded upon good principles, and leads on to glory and honor and immortality.

AND may the death of her, whose strength was weakened in the way, and whose days were shortened, make a suitable impression upon the minds of all now present before God. Consider, my hearers, the feeble tenure by which we hold our lives. Consider that the clock of time is in constant motion, and, when the moment

of our departure arrives, *the alarm strikes and all is done.* No moment, therefore, should be suffered to pass unimproved. We should use every suitable method to bring our minds into habits of attention to things spiritual and divine. And while gliding along the current of time we should direct our course to the haven of eternal rest.

COULD the departed spirit of our deceased friend be allowed to address itself to us, would it not adopt language like this? "I am directed to warn you, who scoff at religion, not to trifle with things sacred. The religion you attempt to ridicule is highly important, and the day is coming when you will mourn and lament. Ye profane and wicked! I am directed by the father of Spirits to exhort and entreat you to venerate the name, worship, and ordinances of God. For every idle word and for every wicked action you will be bro't to an account. If you die in your sins, you will be driven away in your wickedness. Repent, therefore and reform before too late. To you who have deceived yourselves with a vain hope I am authorized to declare, that the veil of self delusion will soon be torn asunder, and your characters will be fully known. Your hope must perish. Recover yourselves from such dangerous delusion, and rest your hopes upon the rock of ages, lest when you cry, *Lord, Lord, open unto us, he should say, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* To youth I am also permitted to recommend religion. In your early days regard the counsels of religious wisdom, and acquire the habits of virtue. From my own experience I can assure you, that the pleasures of early

piety are neither few nor small. Religion forbids nothing which would not injure you, and commands nothing but what would in some way profit you. For godliness, even in youth, is great gain, and its paths are pleasant and peaceful. You may consider me as a messenger sent from heaven to exhort and persuade you to become religious. Open your ears, therefore, to my voice, and your hearts to my instruction, and *remember your Creator in the days of your youth.* Before I take my leave and return to fairer worlds on high, I must open my mind to professing christians. Why so cold and indifferent in your devotions? Why so worldly minded and formal? Why such a great difference between your profession and life? Where is your charity and brotherly love? Where have fled your resolutions to attend with constancy to the preached word, and your promises to regard the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel? Consider your standing. Examine your hearts. Exalt your affections. Become truly religious, not only in word and name, but in deed and truth. Attune your hearts and prepare to sing with me and with all the Spirits of the just made perfect, the song of redeeming love.

"I go, I fly, and vanish into life."

A P P E N D I X.



C O N T A I N I N G

SOME CONCISE ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND
WRITINGS OF

SIBYL RICHARDSON,

ON WHOSE

D E A T H

The preceding Sermon was delivered the Sabbath
after her interment.

Though dead she yet speaketh.

"Heav'n gives us friends to bless the present scene ;
Resumes them to prepare us for the next."

YOUNG.

TO THE READER.

THE Author of the foregoing discourse, at the request of the particular friends and connexions of the young woman deceased, undertakes with readiness to give you some account of her life and writings. From personal acquaintance with her, and from writings she left for the benefit of her greatest intimates, and also from information received from her friends, he is able to lay before you some just ideas of her sentiments and character, and it is his sincere desire and prayer, that by perusing the few following pages, you may entertain more exalted thoughts of religion, and that you may be excited to the greatest diligence to make your calling and election sure. And remember, that the death of others is the harbinger of our own.



SIBYL RICHARDSON, youngest daughter of Zechariah and Sarah Richardson, was born 19th of January 1770. Her parents were religious and respectable, and the family were at that period healthful and prosperous. But in the fourth year of her age, her father was called hence to be here no more. Being distinguished for his attachment to religion, and for his industrious and exemplary life, the Reverend Mr. Bridge, my worthy and respectable predecessor, took particular notice of his death in two discourses from Psalms 68. 5. God, who is the Father of the fatherless, still preserved to her the life of a tender and affectionate mother. Under her nurturing care, she lived with her brothers and sisters during the period of her early youth. Her days passed pleasantly along, and she discovered the usual vivacity and sprightliness of persons in the morning of life. But soon the scene was changed. Sorrow and affliction became her early acquaintance. When in her fifteenth year she was de-

prived of two loving sisters, who died of a consumption in 1784. And the next year, while the fond remembrance of her sisters was still alive, she was called to weep over the remains of her only parent, who died July 3d, 1785. This heavy bereavement, in connexion with former troubles, overwhelmed her tender heart with sorrow. To be left an orphan at such an age and under such impressions of grief, filled her eyes with tears and her heart with anguish. These mournful events produced a greater effect upon her mind on account of the quick succession in which they happened. The inroads made in the family alarmed her fears, and led her to think of her own dissolution. though the arrows of death had proved fatal to many of the family, his quiver was not exhausted. Within two years after, a third sister, and also an intimate friend were taken from this earthly scene, and called to the world of spirits. These affecting instances of mortality rendered her still more thoughtful and anxious. Her mind was filled with deep concern. Religion found its way to her heart. The world appeared less desirable, and she felt more solicitous to make her peace with God. In the devotions of the closet, it appears to have been her earnest prayer, that she might be prepared for death. The deep concern she felt for herself induced her to resolve to live a sober and religious life, and to refrain from the follies and vanities of youth. But her good resolutions, as is too often the case, proved too feeble. She soon found herself entangled in the snares of the world. With less and less reluctance she joined in the social mirth and amusements of life, and for years indulged herself in them. In the midst of such scenes, however, serious reflections arose and disturbed her enjoyment of company. And after returning from scenes of merriment, her reflections were for some time unpleasant and painful. But unwilling to be called singular, and to bear the censure of former companions, she continued to associate with them, and reluctantly entered into their feelings and conversation. Her

pleasure, in the company of her associates, however, gradually abated, and her fears gradually increased. At length she concluded to deny herself the pleasures of society and risk the consequences. This done, she devoted much of her time to reading, meditation and prayer. Christian worship and ordinances attracted more attention. As is highly proper and commendable for all, she often remained in the gallery during communion service, to see that ordinance administered. And she thought it the duty, as it really is the duty, of every one, who means to be a disciple of Christ, to join the number of communicants, and obey the twofold command of our Saviour, "Do this in remembrance of me." And though for a time she felt herself unworthy to approach the table of christian communion, and some passages of scripture which, being misapprehended, filled her mind with doubts and fears, she at length became a professor and enjoyed the privileges of communion. Before she made such a profession, she experienced great anxiety, concern and distress of mind for as much as two years. Sin appeared exceeding sinful. The company of her former associates gave her no satisfaction. The conversation of christians rendered her more sensible of her own wretchedness, and she saw no door of mercy open. But resolving, as we all should, to be constant and engaged in duty, she met with these lines.

"O! might I hear thy heavenly tongue
But whisper,—*thou art mine*;
Those gentle words should raise my song,
To notes almost divine."

Soon after this she was calm, composed and joyful. She had clearer views of the goodness of God and of the excellency of the Gospel. Christ appeared precious, and her heart expanded with praises to God and the Redeemer. The waters of life were sweet to her soul. She was made willing to stand in her lot, and to endure trials, and to follow Christ, wherever he should lead the way. She enjoyed pleasure in denying herself

those things in which she once took delight, and in performing those duties which were once disagreeable. She felt a peculiar regard for the friends of religion, and wished all to taste the riches of divine grace. The atoning sacrifice of Christ was a common subject of her meditation, and her soul rested with fond delight on that love, which was stronger than death. The duties of religion, and the doctrines and prospects of the Gospel seemed to occupy her whole attention. But it was not her lot long to enjoy a cloudless sky. Her mind was often overcast with doubts and fears. It seemed to her, that no real christian could feel so little gratitude and love to God and Christ, and have such feeble desires to meditate and speak concerning the glories of the Redeemer's kingdom. These considerations made her more active, watchful and zealous, and really served to bring her forward in her christian course. For it soon pleased God to make greater discoveries of himself, and to convince her, that the greatest sinners, who are truly penitent, are received into the arms of divine mercy. She became strong in the Lord, and rejoiced under his government. She was firm to resist temptations to sin, and eager to improve in the new and divine life. On her social visits, the great goodness of God to perishing sinners was the favorite topic of her conversation, and she wished for greater powers of mind and language to do justice to the subject. As every attainment in religion renders a person more desirous of higher attainments, she became more and more solicitous to be wholly cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, and to be holy in all manner of conversation. She expressed her feelings at this period in the following lines.

All sinful pleasures I will resign,
And serve the Lord with all my mind;
That flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasure of my soul.

At times, however, as is the case with every christian, she found that her trials and the power of temptations shook the foundations of her confidence, and

made her approach the Lord's table with a trembling and anxious mind. But she found it a profitable season to her soul and took encouragement from these words, which were the theme of the Preacher's discourse on communion day. "*Thou wilt shew me the path of life.*"

THE prayers and ejaculations, she left in her manuscript, denote great resignation amidst bodily pains and distresses, and discover strong desires of enjoying nearness to God. Much of her time was spent in prayer and praise to the Father of mercies, and in reading the holy scriptures. A good example for every christian. For several years before her death, her health was far from being firm; but she was able to keep school, which she did in several places to good acceptance. She spared no pains to instruct her pupils in the first principles of piety and morality, as is the duty of every one who engages in the business of early education. For like soft wax which readily receives any impression we give it, the youthful mind is tender and susceptible of religious impressions.

"As the twig is bent the tree's inclin'd."

IN the course of her reading she acquired some taste for poetic composition, and often expressed her pious thoughts in measured verse. From the pieces which were found among her writings, the following extracts are taken to shew the prevailing current of her sentiments and her talent at such composition.

ON THE LAMB OF GOD.

THOU, Lamb of God, Thou, Prince of peace,
For Thee my thirsty soul doth pine;
My longing heart implores thy grace,
O! make me in thy likeness shine.

When pain o'er my weak flesh prevails,
With lamb like patience arm my breast;
When grief my wounded soul assails,
In christian meekness may I rest.

And when on Zion Thou shalt stand,
And hosts of heav'n adore their King,

May I be found at thy right hand,
And, free from pain, thy glories sing.

ANOTHER.

Jesus, the weary wand'rer's rest,
Give me thy easy yoke to bear ;
With steadfast patience arm my breast,
With spotless love and lowly fear.

Thankful I take the cup from Thee,
Prepar'd and mingle'd by thy skill ;
Though bitter to the taste it be,
Pow'rful the wounded soul to heal.

Be Thou, O rock of ages, nigh,
So shall each murm'ring thought be gone ;
And grief and fear and care shall fly,
As clouds before the mid-day sun.

ADDRESS.

TO THE SOLDIERS OF CHRIST.

SOLDIERS of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the pow'r which God supplies
Through his eternal Son.

To keep your armour bright,
Attend with constant care ;
Still walking in your Captain's fight
And watchful unto pray'r.

WHILE visited with bodily pains and wasting disease, she improved every suitable opportunity in writing on serious and important subjects. She sought retirement from the world, and it appeared to be her ardent desire to hold converse with heaven. In one of the papers she left, it was her devout prayer, that she might prefer piety and virtue to the things of time and sense, and that she might be assimilated more and more to the image of God.

A little before her dissolution, she wrote letters for the perusal and benefit of her brothers, and, when she had folded them, she wrote upon them a request, that they might not be read until she should be laid in her grave. The letters express her feelings of gratitude to them for their tender regard and fraternal affection

and for the unwearied attention they paid her in the course of her sickness, and hold forth her ardent desire, that they might act with reference to futurity and devote their lives to religion. In the letter directed to the oldest brother were found these lines.

My body to your care doth fall,
My soul to God I give ;
Remember this ye mourners all,
And to his glory live.

While you lament so small a loss,
And shed a sorrowing tear ;
With humble patience bear the cross,
And walk in holy fear.

When my body you see inurn'd,
In the dark, silent grave ;
O let it be your great concern,
Your immortal souls to save.

I yield the things of time and sense,
For God my Maker calls me hence ;
O may my soul his love enjoy,
And be his praise my sweet employ.

In the foregoing sketches of the life, character and writings of SYBIL RICHARDSON, the writer of them has aimed to be impartial. His authority for describing the state of her mind, he takes from her own handwriting, in a book, which she wrote for her own benefit. From the same source he draws information concerning the effects which trials and afflictions produced upon her mind and heart. And what induced him to prepare these sketches of her history was, to preserve her memory, to gratify her brothers and friends, and to promote religion in the heart of every one who may read them. And he closes in language of Doctor Young on the duty of serious reflection, to which he hopes no reader of this will be a stranger.

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours ;
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,
And how they might have borne more welcome news.

24 JUL 68
F I N I S.